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# JOHN HENRY



HUGH MCHUGH

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THE BEQUEST OF  
**EVERT JANSEN WENDELL**  
(CLASS OF 1882)  
OF NEW YORK

1918

for  
Lou Garrison

With all good wishes

From  
Bertha



# JOHN HENRY





**"Giving her real hair a  
couple of taps."—Page 10.**



# JOHN HENRY

By HUGH McHUGH



G. W. DILLINGHAM CO.

PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

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*JOHN HENRY*

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# **JOHN HENRY AT THE THEATRE**



# JOHN HENRY

## JOHN HENRY AT THE THEATRE.

I WAS down on the card to lead a lady friend of mine to a New York theatre where you can roll around in an orchestra chair at fifty cents a throw.

When a guy can buy a couple of cosy-corners in a dead swell theatre for fifty cents per coze, he's a mark to blow four plunks to squeeze into one of those joints where they feed you on problem plays and fricasséd pasts.

I figured it out that way, and stood pat.

That evening finds me in the parlor as usual. You know the parlor I mean. When a guy reaches that condition where he gives himself the careful glance and says, "Gee! I got to get shaved this evening!" you can bet there's only one parlor in the world for him.

I'm sitting on the sofa with one mitt lying carelessly on the family album and the other bunched around a \$1.70 cane, when my lady friend floats into the arena.

There's a short-arm clinch, a break-away, and we're back in our corners.

"Oh, John Henry!" says my lady friend, giving her real hair a couple of taps and glancing out in the dining-room to see if mother was rubbering.

I tell you, boys, it's aces when your lady friend does that after a short clinch. There's nothing to it.

When a girl stamps her foot and talks with a tobasco lisp and says, "How dare you kiss me, sir? You are impertinent, sir!" it's a 30 to 1 shot that Gussie Gladtop, the ribbon clerk, who calls every Tuesday evening, first gave her an excuse for writing that libretto.

She's just dying to have you bite her again, but she handles her language wrong, and the four-flush call-down makes you back-pedal so hard that you grab for your hat, and you find yourself saying day-day long before Papa drops in with his usual bundle of benzine, and an A-flat hiccough on the side.

For me the glorious creature who simply says, "Oh, John Henry!" and pats her temples to see if her Seven Sutherland Sisters happens to be mussed.

Anyway, after the bell rings I says to my lady friend, "If you'll tease a trolley with me, we'll be on our way to-morrow night to the theatre!"

"Oh, how lovely!" says my lady friend. "I do so love to go to the theatre. Where shall we go?—Oh! I know! Let's go and see Sara Bernhardt! I'm just dying to see her!"

Up and away to the mines! Sarah Bernhardt at five plunks a chair and me scratching gravel to get my laundry back from foreign lands of a Saturday night!

"I'm just dying to see Sara!"

says the Sweetest Thing Ever, and I'd be a small bunch of parsnips if I hadn't volunteered in the life-saving service then and there.

“Yes,” I says to my lady friend, “I thought you'd like to see Bernhardt!” and all the time I'm giving this glad speech I'm going down the line mentally to see who will give me quick action on a steam-heated touch.

“I thing it is awfully nice of you to ask me to see Bernhardt,” says The Real Thing, throwing a goo-goo at me that settles everything. After a joyous glance like that I'm game to break into the box office and wrestle the keeper for the gate money.

Anyway, after a Labored Conversation with a friend, I'm helped to the price next day, and I patter away for

the pasteboards. My lady friend togs out in her revelry rags, and I'm somewhat of a Big Event myself when we slide into the Gold-Bond building and reach out for Ten-Dollars' worth of amusement, hot off the griddle.

“Mercy me!” says my lady friend, after the curtain has been up a while,

“what are they talking about? I can't understand a word!”

I'm sitting there holding the funeral services over my ten plunks, so I'm not wise to what's doing on the stage.

“What's the matter?” I says.

“Listen!” says Clara Jane.

I listened. In a minute I was next. The track-walkers on the stage were talking Dago! Dago, mind you! and me just after putting on mourning for my ten plunks!

“Oh! they’re doing the trick in French,” I says, off-hand, just as though I paid my car-fare in French every morning.

Say! I don’t know enough about French to find Paris on the map—honest, that’s straight! But I’m thinking of my dear departed ten, so I makes the play!

“What are they saying now?” says the Proposition in Peaches.

Right there was where I fell in the cellar.

“Bon gre de la tour be jee!” I says, handing her the hottest accent that was ever turned loose.

“Oh! John Henry!” says my lady friend. “Why, I didn’t know you could speak French! How lovely! What does it mean in English?”

It was up to me to make good.

“It means,” I says, “that Sara is handing a call-down to the old guy that looks like a cheese sandwich. She says to him, ‘See here! you’ve got another bun on! How dare you trail into my flat with your tide high enough to float a battleship?’”

“That doesn’t sound very poetical,” says the Extreme Limit.

“It isn’t poetical,” I says, “but it’s the goods, all right. ‘Bon gre,’ that’s French for a bun, and ‘de la tour’ means the rest.”

That was where I caught step with my finish.

I had to translate everything that was said on the stage, and I couldn’t even pronounce the name of the piece they were playing.

All I could do was to remember some of the swell language I had heard at other play joints, and I rushed them at my lady friend so fast that she hadn't time to decide that I ought to be on my way to a foolish house.

When Bernhardt addressed a lot of French supers I used up a bunch of tickle-your-fancy language that May Iwin hands to her rib-cracked audiences, and my lady friend stood for it.

When Coquelin pushed out his chest and jawed every one in sight, I threw my whole soul into the translation and handed my lady friend a line of talk that I heard in a burlesque at "The New York." Coquelin made an awful hit with my lady friend. If I could have remembered more of those

good things Coquelin would have been aces with her ever after.

When Coquelin and Sara got into one of those short-arm duets, I sprung some of Florodora on my lady friend. She seemed to like it. Especially when I handed her some of Edna Wallace Hopper's epigrams, with a short line of talk from Tommy Ryley and a side-speech here and there from Ed. Rosenbaum. I hated to do it, but I was in up to my neck, and I couldn't holler for help. No one in the audience would have responded. They were all too busy making the same bluff that I was. Even the ushers were trying to applaud with a French accent.

I never lost ten plunks so hard in all my life.

Before the first act was over I had Sara talking about a sure cure for rheumatism that I read in an almanac, and I had Coquelin reciting the "Charge of the Light Brigade."

It was a hot evening—for me!

Before the second act was half through I went off my dip. I was nutty from pit to dome. I had enough bum French in my topknot to start one of those sit-back-hold-tight table d'hôte places, with wine at 40c. a grab.

It was fierce.

But it was all off when I put Sara into Mother Goose. That was the last camel. My lady friend wouldn't stand for it when I told her that Bernhardt was saying "Old Mother Hubbard, she went to the cupboard." She

•

thought I was stringing her. I guess I was.

I told her that the French had gone to my head. Clara Jane said I looked pale, and hadn't we better go home; she had enough, anyway!

I'll bet she had. I'll bet four dollars my lady friend had the worst play, bar none, that was ever adapted from the French. That's what she had, and I had such a headache!

After we paddled off home my lady friend said she didn't exactly understand the plot of the play, but she'd be glad if I got the book and read the rest of it to her.

Me!—off to the woods! Me!—to the tall timber till she wakes up! No more glad tidings from the French for me. My lady friend is the Whole

Output, but she'll have to get out of her trance and take me without mayonnaise dressing.

I was a lobster to sit in the game, but I'm not pâte de foie gras enough to stay there after my feet get cold.

The next time I trot with my lady friend to the theatre it will be to "The New York," where they talk plain United States, and where you get two cosy-corners at fifty cents a throw!

Believe me!

Yours, on the griddle,

JOHN HENRY.



**JOHN HENRY IN A  
STREET CAR**



## JOHN HENRY IN A STREET CAR.

**T**HROW me in the cellar and  
batten down the hatches.  
I'm a wreck in the key of G  
flat.

I side-stepped in among a bunch of  
language-heavers yesterday and ever  
since I've been sitting on the ragged  
edge with my feet hanging over.

I was on my way down to Wall  
street to help J. Pierpont Morgan buy  
a couple of railroads and all the world  
seemed as blithe and gay as a love  
clinch from Laura Jean Libbey's  
latest.

When I climbed into the cable-car I

felt like a man who had mailed money to himself the night before.

I was aces.

And then somebody blew out my gas.

At the next corner two society flash-lights flopped in and sat next to me.

They had a lot of words they wanted to use and they started in.

The car stopped and two more of the 400's leading ladies jumped the hurdles and came down the aisle.

They sat on the other side of me.

In a minute they began to bite the dictionary.

Their efforts aroused the energies of three women who sat opposite me, and *they* proceeded to beat the English language black and blue.

In a minute the air was so full of

talk that the grip germs had to pull out on the platform and chew the conductor.

The next one to me on my left started in:

“Oh, yes; we discharged our cook day before yesterday, but there’s another coming this evening, and so——”

Her friend broke away and was up and back to the center with this:

“I was coming down Broadway this morning and I saw Julia Marlowe’s leading man. I’m sure it was him, because I saw the show once in Chicago and he has the loveliest eyes I ever looked at!”

I knew that that was my cue to walk out, kick the motorman in the

knuckles, upset the car and send in a fire call, but I passed it up.

I just sat there and bit my nails like the heavy villain in one of Corse Payton's ten, twen, thir dramas.

That "loveliest eyes" speech had me groggy.

Whenever I hear a woman turn on that "loveliest eyes" gag about an actor I always feel that a swift slap from a wet dish-rag would look well on her back hair.

Then the bunch across the aisle got the flag.

"Well, you know," says the broad lady who paid for one seat and was compelled by Nature to use three, "you know there's only five in our family, and so I take just five slices of stale bread and have a bowl of water ready



**"The broad lady who  
paid for one seat."—Page 28.**



in which I've dropped a pinch of salt. Then I take a piece of butter about the size of a walnut, and thoroughly grease the bottom of a frying-pan; then beat five eggs to a froth, and——”

I'm hoping the conductor will come in and give us all a tip to take to the timber because the cops are going to pinch the room, but there's nothing doing.

One of the dames on my right finds her voice and passes it around:—

“ Oh, I think it's a perfect fright! I always did detest electric blue, any-way. It is so unbecoming, and then——”

I've just decided that this lady ought to make up as a Swede servant

girl and play the part, when her friend hooks in:

“ Oh, yes; I think it will look perfectly sweet! It is a foulard in one of those new heliotrope tints, made with a crêpe de chine chemisette, with a second vest peeping out on either side of the front over an embroidered satin vest and cut in scallops on the edge, finished with a full ruche of white chiffon, and the sleeves are just too tight for any use, and the skirt is too long for any good, and I declare the lining is too sweet! and I just hate to wear it out on the street and get it soiled, and I was going to have it made with a tunic, and Mrs. Wigwag—that’s my brother-in-law’s first cousin—she had her’s made to wear with

guimpes—and they are so economical!  
and—”

Think of a guy having to ride four miles and get his forehead fanned all the while with talk about foulard and crêpe de chine and guimpes!

Wouldn’t it lead you to a padded cell?

Say! I was down and out—no kidding!

I wanted to get up and fight the door-tender, but I couldn’t.

One of the conversationalists was sitting on my overcoat.

I felt that if I got up and called my coat back to Papa she might lose the thread of her story, and the jar would be something frightful.

So I sat still and saved her life.

The one on my right must have been

the Lady President of The Hammer Club.

She was talking about some other girl and she didn't do a thing to the absent one.

She said she was svelte.

I suppose that's Dago for a shine.

That's the way with some women. They can't come right out and call another woman a polish. They have to beat around the bush and chase their friends to the swamps by throwing things like "svelte" at them. Tush!

I tried to duck the foreign tattle on my right and by so doing I'm next to this on my left:

"Oh, yes; I think politics is just too lovely! I don't know whether I'd rather be a Democrat or a Republican, but I think—oh! just look at the

hat that woman has on! Isn't that a fright? Wonder if she trimmed it herself. Of course she did; you can tell by—”

I'm gasping for breath when the broad lady across the aisle gets the floor:

“ No, indeed! I didn't have Eliza vaccinated. Why, she's too small yet, and don't you know my sister's husband's brother's child was vaccinated, and she is younger than our Eliza, but I don't just care, I don't want—”

Then the sweet girlish thing on my left gave me the corkscrew jab.

It was the finish:

“ Isn't that lovely? Well, as I was telling you, Charlie came last night and brought Mr. Storeclose with him. Mr. Storeclose is awfully nice. He

plays the mandolin just too sweet for anything, and——”

Me!—to the oyster beds! No male impersonators garroting a mandolin—not any in mine!

When I want to take a course in music I'll climb into a public library and read how Baldy Sloane wrote the Tiger Lily with one hand tied behind him and his feet on the piano.

So I fell off the car and crawled home to mother.

# **JOHN HENRY ON BUTTING-IN**



## JOHN HENRY ON BUTTING-IN.

**O**F course if a fellow has a lady friend that's a dead swell looker he's always anxious to grab her by the elbow and lead her in among the rest of the promenaders.

I'm out to wager two or more seven-dollar bills that when it comes to face and form my lady friend has the rest of the bunch looking like the wall-flowers at a Choctaw cotillion.

She's the flag from the starter.

She's the only mirror on the mantelpiece—believe me!

I took her down the lane to one of those swell grub stations the other night and since then every time I think

about it I feel like getting up and ordering myself out of the room.

Oh! scold me! scold me!

But I had to do it.

When a fellow is out buying his lady friend a pleasant evening and he runs into a lot of low-foreheads he has to back up—that's all there is to it.

It goes against the grain to stand up and introduce my lady friend to every laborer in the four-flush vineyard who trails up to the table and gives me a glad look.

It does indeed.

Being somewhat of a money hater myself, of course I'm wise to enough pikers to fill a ploughed field.

Just as sure as I stride into a fancy feed-store with nothing on my mind but a desire to act like a gentleman

and buy hot cookies for the Best and Only I'm doomed to meet a bunch of sawdust sports who want to leave their own tables and associate with me.

Of course they only do it just because they have elastic in their necks.

They expect an introduction to the Beautiful Girl and after getting it they've figured it out to hand her a line of conversation that will charm her to a standstill and make the Man she's With look like a dried apple.

And every mother's son of them talks like he'd been struck in the grammar by a ferryboat.

Anyway, I took my lady friend to a sumptuous soup-house the other evening for dinner. I've just ordered four-dollar's worth off the card and we're sitting there in the hand-painted bean-

ery chatting pleasantly and waiting for the 'longshoreman to journey back with the oysters.

Up to our table comes Abie Sluiceberger.

Abie has a great pull all along the line because the picture of an uncle of his hung in the Hall of Fame for nearly an hour before the janitor got on to it and threw it out.

Abie puts a hand on each corner of the table and leans over with all the grace peculiar to a soft shell crab.

"Hello, John Henry!" says Abie.

I bow and give him a Klondike grin, but he ducks and comes up happy.

"Eatin'?" inquires Abie.

"No, Abie," I answered, just to put him wise to the fact that a swift walk-away would do us all good. "No;

we're not eating. We just dropped in to play a few hands of bridge whist with the waiter and he's gone to get a deck of cards. We never come into a restaurant to eat. Usually we drop in during the rush hours and help the proprietor peel the oysters. On this occasion, however, we're out for a dickens of a spree so we've decided to play bridge with the waiter."

"Quit your joshin', John Henry!" says Abie; "you're getting to be a worse kidder than Bill McConnell!"

Then Abie pushes a lovely smile over in the direction of my lady friend, but it doesn't land because she's busy behind the bill of fare.

After a while Abie notices that it's up to him to fondle a fierce frost, so he backs out.

"Who's your friend?" inquires Clara Jane, after Abie had moseyed away.

Now, you know, a fellow can't confess to the Original Package of Sweetness that he's entered in the same race with a lot of \$3 goats.

On the level, now, can he?

It was my cue to make a Big Play.

I had to get gabby and make Clara Jane believe I associated only with Torrid Tamales.

And did I?

Oh! ask me easy just to tease me!

"Who! that?" I says, after I fished for a few French-fried potatoes; "why that's Lord Hope."

My lady friend dropped her knife and fork and gave me the startled gaze.



“‘Who’s your friend?’  
she inquired.”—Page 42.



I never whimpered.

Oh, scold me! scold me!

“Lord Hope!” says she. “Why, John Henry, you never told me you knew Lord Hope!”

“ Didn’t I?” I says; “ my! my! how thoughtless! Well; that’s His Lordship all right, all right!”

Clara Jane thought a while and I carved my initials on a sliver of celery.

“ But you called him Abie!” says she, after a pause.

“ Sure thing!” I says; “ what else? Want me to call him Mose or Rosey or Meyer or Ikey? He’s not Irish.”

“ I can’t imagine an English nobleman being called Abie,” says my lady friend, for she’s a first rate Believer by nature, but a Doubter when the dice roll heavy.

I was beginning to feel just about as happy as a hard-boiled egg, but I was in up to my neck and I couldn't holler for help.

"Englishmen have queer names, especially noblemen. Say! won't you have a charlotte russe or an apple fritter?—it'll do you good!" I says, hoping to swing the conversation close enough to the shore so that I could jump off and take to the timber.

But she wouldn't let go.

"Abie! Abie!" says my lady friend to herself; "Abie Hope! that sounds queer. You must know him pretty well to call him Abie?"

"Oh, yes; we went to school together," I says; "wouldn't you like to bite into a portion of pie just by the way of no harm?"

“ Why, John Henry ! ” said Clara Jane, giving me the glassy glare ; “ and you’ve always told me you went to school in Communipaw ! ”

My finish was ringing the door bell.

Just then Mike McGuire strolled into the neighborhood and wanted to hang up his hat on my hook.

Mike is another Lad with a Feeble Forehead and when he’s not pounding the pave in front of Booze Bazaar he’s acting as second assistant engineer in a pool room.

Once in a while Mike breaks into a theatre and tries to act till some one catches him with the goods. Then he apologizes, backs out of his harness and is up and away to the swamps.

“ Good evening ! ” says Mike, pushing out the familiar fist,

I'm right back at him with a short-arm nod of recognition, and in a minute I'm busy with my beans.

"Feedin', I see!" says Mike, wishing to show my lady friend that his powers of observation are strictly home-made.

I gave him a look that I figured would comb his hair, but he's out to make a deep impression on Clara Jane so my haughty expression didn't finish one, two, three.

Before I can get back from the breakaway I find him reciting the sad story of his life and watching my lady friend to see if she enjoys light literature.

"Oh, yes," says McGuire, "I do so love the stage. I've been playing the Provinces for eighteen weeks as Hot-

spur, the Boy Hero, in Ben Hur, and  
I was the hit of the show!"

Wouldn't that upset your box office?  
Him the hit of the show!

Why, if applause was selling for  
two cents a ton his ability couldn't get  
a handful.

Two to one he was out doing the  
potato plantations with a No. 63 Unc.  
Tom's Cab. Co.

About all that guy could mix with  
is a parcel of Uncle Tommers.

Finally, after writing about four  
chapters and getting his life lines  
crossed with George Washington,  
Manny Friend, John McCullough  
and Tod Sloane, he begins to notice  
that the wind is blowing chill across  
the wild moor so he signals the con-  
ductor and hops off the wagon.

“Who was that?” inquires my lady friend, as McGuire ambles back to his own table.

“That,” I says; “Oh! that was the Earl of Yarmouth.”

Clara Jane handed me a swift glance, then she patted her hat-pins and grabbed her gloves.

“Come along, John Henry!” says she “King Edward will be here in a minute and after what I’ve read about him I don’t think I care to meet him. Let’s go home.”

She wins in a whisper.

It’ll take three weeks to square myself.

Hereafter, me to Dennetts! Me to the stack o’ wheats symposium where the rest of the entries stick to their stalls. Where the outside conversa-

tion is confined to "Draw one!" and  
"Boil two, meejum!"

No more swell Sandwich Salons for  
me, where the grafters want to butt in  
all the while.

Oh! scold me! scold me!



# **JOHN HENRY IN LITERATURE**



## JOHN HENRY IN LITERATURE.

**I**'VE got a friend in the literary business.

He writes books and wears hair enough to put the Brotherhood of Barbers on the bum.

When he isn't running a serial story through the magazines he's running his fingers through the eel-grass on his topknot and looking wise.

I hate to knock a friend, but simply because a guy is a genius does he have to rush around with a mop on his ko-ko, and butt into a public building every time he thinks in the open air?

My friend's name is Newton With-

eringham Hurtuboise in print, but at home they call him Bud for short.

Bud's father says the lad with the literary bug ought to be driving a cart in the direction of the dump, but Bud only smiles and asks mother to pass the fish.

A fish diet is said to be the real cheese for the brain.

I think if Bud would only eat a shark or a whale he might be able to write something warm.

I'm not knocking, remember; I'm only saying what I think.

I hate a knocker.

I used to go to school with Bud. While he was inside licking up logarithms and beating Cæsar's Commentaries to a pulp, I was always loafing around the outside of the Knowledge

Factory, printing my name on the fence with a jackknife, and acting just like the village cut-up.

And look at the difference between us to-day!

Bud can sit down and write a novel that will stand you up in the corner, but when he wants to get down-town he has to touch the old lady for the price of a car-ride.

I never got beyond the Fifth Reader, and I couldn't dig up a Latin word to save my soul, so all I can do is to squeeze into a pool-room, bury my face in the dope and crawl out a little later with a hatful of money.

I tell you it's all dead wrong to give the little old red schoolhouse the glassy grin. That's right.

Anyway, I bumped into Bud the

other evening and I led him to a trough.

I coughed for a couple of throat teasers and Bud warmed up with the gab.

He was out to tell me how hard it is to write a novel, but I cut in on his circuit.

“It’s a cinch!” I says: “all a dub has to do is to pound out a parcel of paragraphs, drag them down to the starter and let them get away in a bunch.”

I was ready to buy again, so Bud didn’t contradict me and delay the game.

After I had filled his reservoir he turns the hot-air into his pipes and comes down the lane with the asser-

tion that I couldn't write a postal card to a friend and finish right.

I call that ingratitude.

To give me a steer like that after I mobiled with him across the Plaza and helped him to six bowls of Anheuser milk!

Well, there's no literary fiff that can give me the elbow.

Just to show Bud what a clever brute I am I went home and wrote a novel.

The reason it's so good is because I took my hunch from Rud. Kipling's style.

It isn't quite as chesty as "David Harum," but there's more poetry in it.

When Bud sees it he'll put up the shutters and take to the lumber camps.

Here's the gag:

## THE BEAUTIFUL SNOW.

(A study from life in a great, great city.)

## CHAPTER I.

Vy am I vaiting here alone  
Mit all dese udder folks?  
Stob making laughings ven you see  
Dot I am making chokes!

—*Sam Bernard.*

---

Sorrowfully the snowflakes sat upon the sidewalk.

A tall, wide man moved thoughtfully down the street in an opposite direction to that which he had come from.

Suddenly, and sorrowfully, withal, he emulated the snowflakes and sat upon the sidewalk.

While at home the wife waited wearily.

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## CHAPTER II.

He rubbered hard to see the stage,  
But only saw a hat;

Next day he heard the play was bad,  
And he was glad of that.

—*Andrew Mack's Irish Melodies.*

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The sea hath many perils for those who go down in ships; but hath not the sidewalk perils for those who go down in slips?

Esoteric Science leads one to suppose so. Meanwhile the wife waited wearily at home, and the cook tapped the beefsteak nervously with the coal shovel. It was her night out.

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### CHAPTER III.

“My mother was a lady,” so  
She said, but just the same  
She ate boiled cabbage with a knife  
Except when company came.

—*DeWolf Hopper.*

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Presently the first section of the tall, wide man pulled in on the home siding.

The second section, consisting of a boot heel and several portions of overcoat and trousers, remained out on the sidewalk.

"Oh, Harold!" the wife exclaimed, passionately, "how did you fall?"

"When I have fully recovered," he said, not unkindly, "I may demonstrate for your benefit the various convolutions through which I passed. At the present moment, however, an illustration of my method is impossible for obvious reasons. Therefore, you must let your imagination feed your curiosity until such time as I am better able to tie myself in a bow knot for your instruction and edification."

Then he swore fitfully, and yelled for the arnica bottle, the brute!

THE END.

I showed the novel to Clara Jane and she threw the most ladylike fit you ever saw.



"I showed the novel  
to Clara Jane."—Page 60.



“ Oh, it’s perfectly lovely! ” says she.

Me!—to the roll-top desk! Me!—with a fountain-pen in each hand and a hand-sewed novel hot off the steam pipes every week.



## JOHN HENRY PLAYS POOL.

**D**ID you ever drop in of an evening and try to play pool under a cross-fire from the chair-warmers?

It's the limit.

It has golf slapped to a standstill, and pony polo isn't one, two, nine.

From the moment you reach for your cue the sofa-pounders cut loose and chin you to a call-down.

"Break 'em easy, now!" says old Thirsty Bill.

All the afternoon he's been sitting up with some ice and a bottle of Wilson. That's all.

He has to close one eye and squint

the other when he looks at you, but he's as wise as a weasel.

If you stood him up he wouldn't know the 14 ball from the cuspidor.

One of those old dubs that's never happy unless he's teasing his throat with booze or talk.

Then Red Necktie rolls his barrel in the shop and cuts a conundrum:

"Why don't you play the 8 ball in the side?"

Red Necktie only played one game in his life and that was tag.

Somebody caught him then with the goods, and all he has done since is cuddle down in a chair and tell people how to make fancy with the cue.

Then the three Bixby Brothers—Shine, Polish and Glisten—start in to write epigrams.



**"Try the combination on  
the seven ball for the corner."—Page 67.**



"Play the round ball!" suggests Shine.

"Chalk your feet and you won't slip!" observes Polish.

"Play the yellow ball in the cosy corner!" chirps Glisten, and old Thirsty Bill laughs so heartily over this Pineroism that Glisten swells up and buys Thirsty another tub.

Then Long-haired Lemuel crawls under the ropes and begins to offer suggestions in a hoarse whisper.

Long-haired Lemuel won a fifty-point game once from the champion player of Tioga County and ever since he's been sitting up in the rack throwing down hints to the slow walkers.

"Try the combination on the 7-ball for the corner!" croaks Long-haired Lemuel.

Now the gag is that from where Lemuel sits you couldn't see the 7-ball with the Lick telescope.

In hops Willie McSweet, the Village Beauty.

Willie is the lad with the loft full of light conversation, and Mama lets him stay out till 9:15 every evening.

Willie travelled over the New York Central once as far as Albany and when he came home his fond parents had to put baseball masks on his head, fore and aft, to keep it from bursting.

“ Ah ! ” says Willie ; “ playing pool ? ”

“ No, ” remarks Glisten, “ they’re putting up a picket fence ! ” and old Thirsty Bill hands out a laugh which nets him another dipper.

Then there's the Mister Man you're playing with.

I was entered in a handicap that evening with a chap named Biddle.

Biddle is one of those low comedians who throw out catch-lines and wait for the laugh.

His line of gags dates back to the days when the B. & O. was first built.

Nowadays when I hear a pool-room comedian speaking lines about getting seasick on the B. & O. I'm wise to the fact that he dips in the Farmer's Almanac for his comedy stuff.

Biddle likes to knock.

He says he'd rather be Alan Dale than be President, because Dale can throw the hammer and get back to his safety deposit vaults without a scratch.

He says it's a cinch to be dramatic

toaster and trimmer when you can hide in the tall grass and do your knocking through a long-distance newspaper.

Anyway, that's neither here nor there.

"What are you playing for?" I said to Biddle.

"The ball I'm looking at," he answered.

There's a slight difference of opinion between Biddle's eyes—they have opposite points of view, as it were.

I figured it out that the ball he was looking at was the one Thirsty Bill was fondling, but I didn't say anything.

I was due to hear a loud holler from the old 'un if Biddle played that ball.

"What is it now?" I inquired.

“ The one I hit ! ”

Did you ever meet one of those fellows who says “ The one I hit ” and then smashes into seven balls and claims everything that drops ?

Don’t they jolt you ?

By this time Thirsty Bill had all his lights up.

He had the borders burning and a calcium “ spot ” followed him around.

“ Can shu play com’nashun on zat pink monkey ash settin’ on green ball ? ” he asked ; and then he went down and out.

I put up my cue and blue pencilled the push.

Pool is a great game, but the chair-crouchers put crêpe on it.



# **JOHN HENRY ON WOULD-BE ACTORS**



## JOHN HENRY ON WOULD-BE ACTORS.

**T**OMMY HARPER isn't a bad sort, but he has a bug that he was put in this world for the purpose of elevating the stage.

Tommy thinks he could rush on and play Richard the Third to such an extent that the audience would rise up and carry him out on their shoulders.

Perhaps they would—dead.,

Tommy thinks that with his voice he could make Jean de Reszke's notes look like a bunch of bad money.

He's out to bet a couple of seven-dollar bills that he has Herbert Kelcey fanned to a finish, and that when it

comes to comedy Francis Wilson and Jeff D'Angelis aren't visible on the shell road.

He says that if ever he can break into a play with Mrs. Leslie Carter he'll turn such a warm pair of goo-goo eyes on her that somebody will have to get up and yell for the fire department.

But Tommy can't make good with his shape.

He's as broad across the bosom as Colonel Jack Carter.

In the love passages his embonpoint would set him back about three feet.

He can wear a full-dress suit all right, but after it's set he looks like a load of new-mown hay.

Tommy belongs to the Ancient and Honorable Order of Tack Hammers.

He always knocks in a lady-like way, and his remarks don't register once in ten.

He likes to go to a theater and squirt verbal seltzer water all over the place.

His language is all fine and daisy, but when he turns on the loud pedal he sounds like a dog locked up in the barn.

He is one of those dubs who thinks he's missed his calling, and, no doubt, his calling has been shaking hands with itself ever since because he missed the boat.

I've known Tommy for a long time, so he feels free to read his dope to me.

Every time a new book comes out

Tommy wants to get it dramatized and star in it.

He tried to get "Janice Meredith," but Frank McKee cut across lots and headed him off.

Tommy had an idea that if the part of Washington crossing the Delaware in "Janice Meredith" could be fattened up with a couple of topical songs and a comedy bit, he'd be aces for the road.

He says that if he had seen "David Harum" first he would have made Billy Crane look like a plate of cold potatoes.

Tommy told me once that if he could play the opposite part to Marie Dressler the public would have to bite its way into the theater.



**"It would be like  
finding money."**—Page 79.



He thinks he has Pete Dailey down, with both shoulders on the carpet, and the stake-holder is ladling out the gate money.

Tommy has an idea that it would be like finding money to dramatize Major Pond's "Eccentricities of Genius" and let him play all the people from Ann Eliza Young to Bill Nye.

Tommy has been after me to get Dave Belasco to write him a play, but I've stood him off by telling him that I thought Sardou could fit him better.

Every day he drives up to my ranch in a hansom to find out if Sardou has cabled yet.

I've just punched out a parcel of paragraphs which I shall turn in to Tommy.

I think it will do him good:

“My DEAR TOMMY:—I have at last secured a play for you.

“The author wanted twenty thousand dollars for it, but we compromised. He took eighty cents in cash and I promised him the rest.

“In the first act you come in with an axe in each hand and you play the piano with the other. Then you go out and borrow a golf suit and some Scotch dialect, and you come on the stage looking like an Irishman. In this act you have four songs, two solos, a cake-walk and six months in jail if the audience catches you.

“In the second act you will be compelled to disguise yourself and look like a gentleman. You'll need a

lot of rehearsals for this second act.

“In the third act you’ll play an elephant. The scene is in a boarding house. You’ll have to leave your trunk there. This act will be very funny if any one laughs at it.

“The fourth act is a dramatization of the Pennsylvania Railroad time tables. You should cut quite a figure in this act.

“The fifth act is at the bottom of a well. You play the pump. You ought to be a great success if you handle it with care.

“In the sixth act you play the races with real money. You’ll have to furnish it yourself. I’m only your manager—I’m not a bank.

“The scene of the seventh act is

laid on top of a mountain. You are discovered standing on top of the mountain. Then somebody moves the mountain.

“ In the eighth act you will appear as The Pride of Jennico, if you don’t break your leg when you fall off the mountain.

“ In the ninth act you play the hose. If the audience hasn’t gone home by this time you’ll have to go out and give an imitation of Edwin Booth. If that doesn’t send them home we’ll call for the police.

“ I’m sure you will like the play. Your salary will be two hundred dollars a week—some weeks.

“ Call and see me at your earliest convenience. Take the elevator. There

isn't anything else in the building to offer you.

"Yours with love,  
"JOHN HENRY."

You'd think that would detain Tommy temporarily, wouldn't you?

But it won't.

He'll forget it, and day after tomorrow he'll flash the intelligence on me that he has invented a strangle-hold line of business that will put Looey Harrison on the blink; and that when it comes to low comedy he has Dan McAvoy going over the hills and away to the woodshed.

You know, when a guy like Tommy once gets the worm in his noddle that he's cut out for an actor you couldn't coax it away with a mallet.



**JOHN HENRY PLAYS  
PROGRESSIVE  
EUCHRE**



## JOHN HENRY PLAYS PROGRESSIVE EUCHRE.

**O**NE night recently I went out with Clara Jane to one of those progressive euchre fights.

It was my first time up before the judge, and I felt as nervous as a new servant girl.

Clara Jane introduced me to the bunch, and I drew a tall lady who had lived in Chicago for many years and didn't know what to do about it.

I saw that I was out to get bumped if I didn't forget my fears and talk fast, so I braced and began to cut grass.

"Lovely weather we're having, ain't it?" I observed. "What's the trump?"

My partner was one of those old things that never speak a line without throwing a con goo-goo with the eye.

I was next in a minute.

She was one of the kind that's anxious to lead you away from your own tootsie wootsie, in the hope that you may have a spare bunch of sweet talk you can hand her on the quiet.

Then she raises the window and yells for a cheap minister.

I was anxious to have my sentence expire with that dame, so I played a swift game.

I ducked to my corner quick when the gong sounded, but I'm afraid the round was against me.

I'm not stuck on myself—believe me!

I consider myself about an 8 to 5 shot, and I feel that I can come down the stretch with the rest of the bunch without the whip.

So when I noticed that every time I looked around the room I'd catch that old fairy giving me the far-away gaze I didn't know whether to puff up and get chesty, or hustle for my coat and my top-piece and go home.

My next partner was a giggler.

Say, boys! those giggling dames are beyond the breakers, aren't they?

I used to think that a girl giggled because she was off her feed, but I've since decided that they hand out those chopped laughs because their brains

bounce around and they get a kink in their conversational powers.

They have a motto which reads: "When in doubt giggle!"

The beauty bright who sat opposite me in the second round giggled by note.

Every time she played a card she giggled, and when she wasn't playing she was fixing her valves for another outburst.

The bell found me groggy at the end of the second round.

The old hen with the languishing lamps was still on my trail.

The next time I went to the center I was matched with a married lady who talked about her husband all the while.

Every time she opened her mouth

she cooked up a fresh batch of hot air about Gus.

“ Oh! my Gus is just the loveliest fellow that ever lived!—whose play is it? Mine! Don’t you know, Gus bought me the sweetest side-combs yesterday, pure tortoise shell with real Rhine stones—is it my play? What’s trumps? Gus is always so thoughtful; he never comes home from business without bringing me a box of candy or something—is it *really* my play? ”

Wouldn’t it make you worse?

Her Gus! I’ll bet he’s an old shrimp with billy-goat whiskers, and every time she goes near him he says “ Me-ya-aaa! ” and kicks her on the shins.

I was hugging the ropes when the bell sounded.

My next partner was a dark-eyed damsel who was engaged to marry a long-legged shadow at the table behind her, and she almost cracked her throat trying to rubber at him and play cards at the same time.

This round was tame.

I went in for the fifth round with a lady who wrote poetry and talked about it for a living.

She put us wise to the fact that Tennyson couldn't play in her yard, and that Edgar Allan Poe was a piker compared with her.

She said she had done a little tid-bit, entitled "Papa's Tide is Rising Slowly, and the Gas Bill's Overdue" that was destined to wake the world.



**'I asked her if she wouldn't  
let the world sleep,  
and play cards.'—Page 93.**



I asked her if she wouldn't please  
let the world sleep, and play cards,  
and she stung me with her cruel eyes.

The round ended with me on my  
knees, but the bell saved me.

The old canary was still hunting  
me up with eyes ablaze with love.

Oh! scold me! scold me! I'm such  
a devil among the has-beens.

For the next round I led out a coy  
lassie who lisped.

She was good company till she  
talked, then the chain broke.

I hate to have a girl plant her  
pleading peepers on me and say,  
"Wath trumphs, spadeth or clubth?"

Don't you?

I had to clinch a great deal to avoid  
punishment in this round.

In the next I met a lady who dealt

out a bunch of remarks about her baby boy, Jim.

Jim, she said, was now only **22** years old and was going through Harvard.

I'll bet four dollars he was going through her money most of the time.

At the finish of this round the old relic with the sad lamps came up to me and tapped me on the shoulder with her fan.

‘Oh! you naughty, naughty boy!’ she peeped, “can’t you see I’m awfully angry at you!”

“I don’t know,” I said; “I’m from Missouri—so you’ll have to show me!”

“I haven’t enjoyed any game this evening one-half as much as that first one,” she said.

Then it all flashed over me, and I was off the griddle in a minute.

She was Pat Crowe in disguise, and I was on the list to be kidnapped.

I side-stepped and found Clara Jane.

“Take me home!” I said, “this society life is killing me.”

Clara Jane is a wise guyine.

She could tell from the startled fawn eye I gave her that I wanted to pull out of the siding and hit the main line for home.

She crawled into her wraps and we left the mob just as all hands were paddling off to the ice-cream trough.

No more progressive things for me. I know when the clock strikes twelve.

Hereafter when they say Society

I'll duck. Me! to the housetops!  
Me! to the dense forest!

When I feel that it's up to me to  
dissipate I'll sit up with a long black  
bottle till I see and hear things that I  
can throw the chairs at without being  
called impolite.

Yours, in a spirit of brotherly love  
—believe me!

JOHN HENRY.

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